

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of the claims replaces all prior versions of the claims in the application:

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) A towing hitch extension adapted to protect the rear bumper of a towing vehicle for detachably attaching to a rear towing hitch of a towing vehicle, said towing hitch extension comprising in combination:

- a tow bar having front and rear ends;
- a front coupling means at said front end for releasable coupling engagement with said towing hitch;
- a transversely extending, horizontally oriented, elongated cross bar extending across and medially adjoining said rear end; [and]
 - a rearwardly opening towing hitch socket mounted at said rear end and vertically offset relative to said tow bar and said cross bar[.] ; and
 - said towing hitch socket being telescopically and matingly engageable with a ball mount assembly and being retainable in association therewith by coupling pin means inserted transversely through such so engaged members.

2. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 1 wherein:

- said rear towing hitch has a rearwardly opening, cross-sectionally rectangular socket;
- each of said tow bar, said cross bar, and said towing hitch socket is tubular and has a cross-sectionally rectangular configuration;
- said front end is telescopically and matingly engageable with said towing hitch socket and is retained in association therewith by coupling pin means inserted transversely through such so engaged members; and
 - said towing hitch socket is telescopically and matingly engageable with a base portion of a ball mount assembly and is retained in association therewith by coupling pin means inserted transversely through such so engaged members.

3. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 1 including brace means fixed to said tow bar and to said cross bar for restraining and reinforcing the position of said cross bar relative to said tow bar.

4. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 3 wherein said brace means comprises a pair of metal plate members positioned one above the other with adjoining portions of said tow bar and said cross bar disposed therebetween.

5. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 4 wherein portions of each of said plate members is welded to generally vertically adjacent portions of each of said tow bar and said cross bar.

6. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 5 wherein the upper one of said metal plate members is welded to generally vertically generally portions of said trailer hitch socket.

7. (Original) The tow hitch extension of claim 6 wherein each of said plate members has a generally hexagonal perimeter configuration.

8. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 1 including a pair of guard projections that each upstand from said cross bar in laterally spaced but adjacent relationship relative to a different respective opposite side of said tow bar.

9. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 8 wherein each of said guard projections is connected against an upper surface portion of said cross bar by weldments.

10. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 8 wherein each of said guard projections comprises a tow hook which is oriented so that the hook portion thereof is forwardly

opening and the base portion thereof extends transversely across and against an upper surface portion of said cross bar.

11. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 10 wherein said base portion of each of said tow hooks includes a region that extends forwardly beyond said cross bar, and each said region includes an aperture therethrough that is adapted to receive and engage a terminal end portion of a safety chain whose mid region is adapted to engage with a portion of a towed vehicle having a hitch with a tongue that is engaged with a ball mount that is connected to said trailer hitch socket.

12. (Original) A towing hitch extension adapted to protect the rear bumper of a towing vehicle for detachably attaching to a rear towing hitch of a towing vehicle, said towing hitch extension comprising in combination

- a tow bar having front and rear ends;
- a front coupling means at said front end for releasable coupling engagement with said towing hitch;
- a transversely extending, horizontally oriented, elongated cross bar extending across and medially joining said rear end;
- a rearwardly opening towing hitch socket mounted at said rear end vertically over said tow bar and said cross bar;
- brace means fixed to said tow bar and to said cross bar for restraining and reinforcing the position of said cross bar relative to said tow bar;
- each of said tow bar, said cross bar, and said towing hitch socket being tubular and having a cross-sectionally rectangular configuration, and
- said towing hitch socket being telescopically and matingly engageable with a ball mount assembly and being retainable in association therewith by coupling pin means inserted transversely through such so engaged members.

13. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 12 wherein said brace means comprises a pair of metal plate members positioned one above the other with adjoining portions of said tow bar and said cross bar disposed therebetween.

14. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 13 wherein portions of each of said plate members is welded to generally vertically adjacent portions of each of said tow bar and said cross bar.

15. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 14 wherein the upper one of said metal plate members is welded to generally vertical portions of said trailer hitch socket.

16. (Original) The tow hitch extension of claim 15 wherein each of said plate members has a generally hexagonal perimeter configuration.

17. (Original) A towing hitch extension adapted to protect the rear bumper of a towing vehicle for detachably attaching to a rear towing hitch of a towing vehicle, said rear towing hitch has a rearwardly opening, cross-sectionally rectangular socket, said towing hitch extension comprising in combination

- a tow bar having front and rear ends;
- a front coupling means at said front end for releasable coupling engagement with said towing hitch;
- a transversely extending, horizontally oriented, elongated cross bar extending across and medially adjoining said rear end;
- a rearwardly opening towing hitch socket mounted at said rear end vertically over said tow bar and said cross bar;
- each of said tow bar, said cross bar, and said towing hitch socket being tubular and having a cross-sectionally rectangular configuration;

- said front end being telescopically and matingly engageable with said towing hitch socket and being retainable in association therewith by coupling pin means inserted transversely through such so engaged members;

- said towing hitch socket is telescopically and matingly engageable with a base portion of a ball mount assembly and being retainable in association therewith by coupling pin means inserted transversely through such so engaged members;

- brace means fixed to said tow bar and to said cross bar for restraining and reinforcing the position of said cross bar relative to said tow bar, said brace means comprising a pair of metal plate members positioned one above the other with adjoining portions of said tow bar and said cross bar being disposed therebetween, portions of each of said plate members are welded to generally vertically adjacent portions of each of said tow bar and said cross bar and portions of the upper one of said metal plate members are welded to generally vertically adjacent portions of said trailer hitch socket; and

- a pair of guard projections that each upstand from said cross bar in laterally spaced but adjacent relationship relative to a different respective opposite side of said tow bar, each of said guard projections being connected against an upper surface portion of said cross bar by weldments.

18. (Original) The tow hitch extension of claim 17 wherein each of said plate members has a generally hexagonal perimeter configuration.

19. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 8 wherein each of said guard projections comprises a tow hook which is oriented so that the hook portion thereof is forwardly opening and so that the base portion thereof extends transversely across and against an upper surface portion of said cross bar.

20. (Original) The towing hitch extension of claim 19 wherein said base portion of each of said tow hooks includes a region that extends forwardly beyond said cross bar, and each said region includes an aperture therethrough that is adapted to receive and engage a terminal end

portion of a safety chain whose mid region is adapted to engage with a portion of a towed vehicle having a hitch with a tongue is engaged with a ball mount that is connected to said trailer hitch socket.